Montgomery Bell Academy 4001 Harding Road, Nashville, TN 37205
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A Great Mistake: 2012 Doomsday Prophecy

By Tony Huang

The date for the end of the world has come and gone, yet the world did not end. All of us here on the Hill are probably happy about this turn of events, but some people are not. One man named Pieter van der Meer built an ark like Noah's ark in preparation for the apocalypse. His family hid in the ark, and Pieter prayed that the world would end. A woman named Nancy Lieder predicted that Planet X would smash into Earth a couple years ago. She claims that she got this information from telepathic aliens. Other people actually bought apocalyptic insurance! They could not have gotten any money, though, because if the world did not end, they would not get any money, and if the world really did end, they would not be around to get money.

What would it have been like, though, to live in a post-apocalyptic world? It all depends on the kind of apocalypse that would have happened.

1. Solar Tsunamis
All the electricity from the world will be gone, and most of the food and water as well. Can you imagine living right now with no electricity, drinking only bottled water, and eating canned food? We would all then slowly die of exposure to too much radiation.

2. The Sun Becomes a Supernova
If the sun became a supernova, we would be dead.

3. WWIII
If World War III happened, then our continent would be destroyed by nuclear bombs. Most of the other continents would be blown up, too, so we would have to move to some place that has not been affected (assuming we do not die of the radiation).

4. An Earthquake
An earthquake is supposed to swallow some people into the earth. Other people would be hit by fires and tsunamis.

5. The Rapture
The Devil and his demons would be having the time of their lives blowing up earth and causing chaos all over the place. We would be living in heaven, though.

The Mayan prediction for the end of the world had one of the largest groups of followers of any doomsday prediction, and when it did not happen, many people felt confused. The 2012 predication has not been the only doomsday where people were disappointed, though. Over a hundred doomsdays have been predicted that are known. Here are some of the recent ones and why:

Sep. 6, 1994; Sep. 29, 1994; Oct. 2, 1994; Harold Camping predicted the rapture, then changed the date.
May 21, 2011 - Harold Camping predicted the rapture again.
Dec 21, 2012 - The Mayan calendar stated that December 21, 2012 was the end of an era.

The world did not end, but we cannot just sit back and relax. The end of the world is coming as we all know, and we have to be ready.

"Aw, can't anybody get this doomsday stuff right?"

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ON THE HILL

2012 Race for the Cure

By Will Gray

This year's annual MBA Race for the Cure team had an excellent turnout. MBA had one of its most successful years yet in the Race for the Cure. The team consisted of two hundred fourteen members who raised over $21,000; eight thousand of which was raised from pledges, and $13,000 from donations. MBA was proud to be sponsored by Uncle's Barber Shop, who gave buzz cuts to the participants in our "buzz cuts for the cure" fund during the football game against McCallie. Numerous teachers and students participated in the fund, including senior, McKay Proctor, and teacher, Mr. Klausner. Another successful fund-raising activity occurred prior to the race when MBA students sold wristbands and t-shirts to help raise the most money they possibly could. Hundreds were sold and are still worn by students as well as teachers. There were also activities to promote the event.

A week before the race, the annual pink-out during the JPII game was held, and the stadium looked as though it was painted white and pink. There were stands set up before the JPII game to help support the pink out, such as the face-painting stand.

Will Gray gets sheared for the cause.

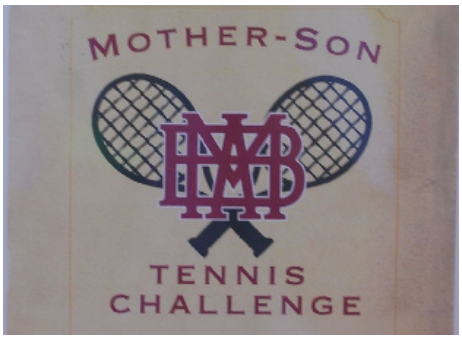
Many of those who pledged also came and participated in the walk/run for the cure. Even the MBA football team showed up wearing their football jerseys and showing their pink. The race was held in Brentwood and started at 8:00 am. It was a great atmosphere at the race; hundreds of people united by one cause. MBA's Race for the Cure team was the top educational team in Middle Tennessee and missed raising the most funds of any educational team by $75! Even more amazing is the fact that MBA raised half of the money in the last week of the fund drive!

In Nashville, over 26,000 people showed up to run in Brentwood and were able to raise $1.4 million. The race was for the Susan G. Komen foundation, which is the most widely known, largest, and best-funded breast cancer organization in the United States. It was started in 1982, and since then has raised over $2 billion for breast cancer research. The foundation has 100,000 volunteers and has partnerships in more than fifty countries. The race this year helped many people throughout Nashville and helped keep the hope alive. Also, if you see Ms. Williams passing by in the hallway, make sure to thank her. None of this would have been possible without her. The Susan G. Komen foundation has affected millions of lives around the world and is continuing to do so with the help and support of MBA.

Turner Johnson bids adieu to his do.

Thanks to the fine barbers at Uncle's for donating their time and skills to a great cause!

ON THE HILL



Mothers and Sons Join Fight for the Cure

By Ben Rosenthal

On Sunday October 21, MBA hosted the first annual Race for the Cure Mother-Son Tennis Tournament. Upon arrival, each team received an MBA for the Cure luggage tag, wristband, and tee shirt, and they had their pictures taken. The teams were also given an option to buy three mulligans for twenty dollars. The teams were split up into four divisions based on skill level, division one being the most experienced players, and division four having at least one player being new to the game. In the beginning, there was much confusion as the original divisions were edited due to additional teams. The women who ran this event, Annie Williams and mother representative, Elaine Lee, were pleasantly surprised by the large turnout for this first-time event.

The format of the tournament was round-robin matches which were composed of six games. The courts closest to the baseball fields were for division four, and the courts closest to the football fields were for division one. In some divisions, there was an odd number of teams; so, one team would sit out each round. For teams waiting to play, snacks and refreshments were provided. Christie Cookies were on sale for one dollar, and there was ample opportunity for cheering and jeering. The rounds went relatively smoothly, but the new draws were convoluted as to who was on bye, and who played on which court. After a few rounds, there was no confusion, and the playing went smoothly. Everybody was enjoying the fun, competitive tennis. It was wonderful to see people who do not usually play tennis out on the courts. Many people discovered that they could play well, even though it was not their main sport, while also spending quality time with a loved one. Will Warren, a new player to the game, said that he "was glad to be able to play tennis in a way which allowed him to have a great time with friends and with his mom." With a success like this one, the event can become a great success in the future as well. The winners of the event (division one) were Andrew Graham and his mother. The most spirited award went to Ben Rosenthal and his mother. Both of these teams received fifty dollar gift certificates to The Melting Pot. The individual player awards went to Ben Shankle and Wilson Vaughan. They both received ten dollar Christie Cookie gift cards.

Carla and Ben Rosenthal

This event, which was truly a wonderful experience for players of all levels, can hopefully continue and become a signature event for MBA in fundraising for the Susan G. Komen Foundation. Thank you to Annie Williams, Elaine Lee, Mr. Boysen, and all who participated for making a beautiful October afternoon into a fun event!

ON THE HILL

Ben Jablonski and Jackson McFadden lend a helping hand with a community service project at the Greenway on October 17.

Microbes Excel in Service Opportunities

The JS led the way in the DVD drive for Vanderbilt Children's Hospital. Great job, guys! Looking Ahead 4 Kids is SO thankful to MBA and their support! Here are the amazing MBA numbers!

*1st place: the 8th grade with 225 DVDs
*2nd place: the 7th grade with 143 DVDs
*3rd place: the 10th grade with 132 DVDs

MBA donated a total of 500 DVDs to VCH. Amazing! Again, thanks to all who contributed!

On Wednesday, October 17, the seventh-grade joined with their senior Big Brothers for service projects in the MBA community. Good job, guys!

ON THE HILL

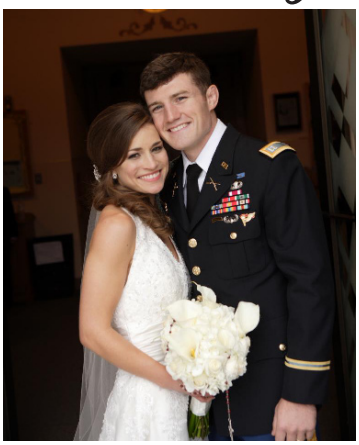
The 7th Grade Journeys to *The Hobbit*

By Alex Bulgarino

Thanks to a very generous alumnus, the seventh grade was treated to a viewing of *The Hobbit* in 3D on December 18 at the Green Hills theater. The story that started them all, *The Hobbit*, came to theaters on December 14th. Many people believe this film is not as good as the timeless *Lord of the Rings* series, but after seeing the movie, I have to disagree. *The Hobbit* contained many of the elements that made *Lord of the Rings* irresistible. The story revolves around Bilbo Baggins (Martin Freeman), a respected hobbit in the Shire. He has no adventures and never does anything unexpected. Then, the wizard, Gandalf (Ian McKlellan), comes to his house and brings the dwarf lord, Thorin (Richard Armitage), and his company of twelve dwarves. After ransacking the pantry, they ask Bilbo to be their burglar on their quest to recover the Lonely Mountain from the dragon, Smaug. At first, Bilbo refuses, but he soon changes his mind and signs the contract, declaring himself the official burglar of the quest. On the main journey, Bilbo encounters many side quests that transform him into a hero. For example, Bilbo stalls trolls and even outsmarts an obsessed, disfigured hobbit, Gollum (from *Lord of the Rings*), in a game of riddles where Bilbo finds the One Ring. Also, the 3D experience as well as the sound coming from the surrounding speakers created great effects in the theater, enhancing the movie. These two effects made the experience very realistic; it was almost like actually being in the Shire or being in a dark cave with a disfigured hobbit. All of the students and teachers who saw the movie probably didn't imagine any orcs in the cave, but it still made the movie exciting if not even more so. The director is planning to make two more movies, *The Desolation of Smaug* (2013) and *There and Back Again* (2014). One film will describe the adventures through Mirkwood Forest and Smaug's death, while the other one will include the Battle of Five Armies. In conclusion, the class trip to see *The Hobbit* was very exciting for all who went. Thanks again to the alumnus who gave us this very generous offer.

Seventh graders wait in line for snacks prior to viewing The Hobbit.

Congratulations, Mr. Simpson!



Mr. Patrick Simpson, the Dean of Students for the Junior School,
wed
Miss Rachel Marie Barga
on
November 24th, 2012
We wish them the best!

FEATURES

Sandy Hook Tragedy Shocks and Saddens

By Hamilton Garber

On December 14, 2012, Adam Lanza entered a school in Sandy Hook, Connecticut, carrying an automatic weapon. He shot and killed 26 people, sadly including 20 children. This event left many people in a state of shock and uncertainty. They began asking questions such as How did this happen? How can my kids be safe? What was the killer's motive? Many of these questions are still unanswered, but the country has begun to open its eyes to the threat of school shootings.

Adam Lanza was a 20-year-old young adult who lived with his divorced mother, Nancy Lanza. On the day of the attack, he fatally shot his mother before exiting his house and driving to the elementary school. He used his gun to shoot through the door and mindlessly took the lives of many children and teachers. When he heard the authorities coming, he quickly turned the gun on himself. This tragedy was the second most fatal school shooting and also the second most fatal in an elementary school in the U.S.

Makeshift Memorial at the Sandy Hook School

The gunman's past is shrouded. His past is unclear because no one has seen him in years, including his father and brother. It is known that he lived in his mother's basement for a few years. His motive for the matricide and the massacre is unknown, although there are several possibilities. Evidence was found in the Lanza residence, suggesting that the young man was to be sent to a counselor or some form of psychological attention because he had been acting strangely. Some believe that he was very upset about the idea of receiving help, which would explain the brutal murder of his mother. Many think that the shooter was a mindless killer, but that brings another interesting question to the table: If he was truly a heartless killer, and truly did not know what he was doing is wrong, then why would he kill himself? I, for one, believe he knew exactly what he was doing, and killed himself to evade punishment for the terrible crime, but the true reason has not been confirmed.

AP Photo of reaction at the scene

Another important point brought to the table yet again is what we can do to keep this from ever happening again. This question has been asked for several similarly tragic events such as the Columbine massacre, the Virginia Tech shooting, and the UT at Austin tragedy. Already schools have been practicing lockdown more often, reinforcing security measures, and buffering the safety measures all around. From a governmental standpoint is the 2nd Amendment, gun control. Would gun control keep a tragic event like Sandy Hook from happening again? Such questions as these go beyond this article, but are to be seen in the near future.

Finally, many heroes arose in this time of crisis. The teachers and faculty of the Sandy Hook Elementary School acted bravely and laid down their lives for those of their children. Several heroic stories have arisen through the weeks since the tragedy. We will continue to think and pray about the families of the children and the faculty that were lost, and this event will continue to live in infamy.

FEATURES

Where Did the Twinkies Go?

By Riley Steanson

Hostess products included the brand names: Hostess, Wonder, Nature's Pride, Dolly Madison, Drake's Butternut, Home Pride, and Merita. Hostess was one of the most powerful companies in all store-bought goods. Sadly, they are now out of business

What does this mean for the Twinkies? The production of the wonderful Twinkie has stopped, but do not be surprised if you find something like a Twinkie made by other companies. The famous Twinkie recipe is now available to other companies because Hostess is no longer using it. For example, I was at the grocery store with my family and found a box of cakes that looked like Twinkies, and in the top right corner of the box it read "New Recipe!" The remaining Hostess cakes are being bought up, and soon none will be left. As soon as the bakery filed bankruptcy, people were hoarding the sugary cakes so they could have one of the "last Twinkies."

The closing of Hostess was a long, drawn out chain of events. On November 9, the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco, and Grain Millers Union (BCTGM) held a large scale strike against Hostess across the country. This strike, which included forcing Hostess to separately ship all Hostess goods and their other products, wasting untold amounts of money, crippled the company's operations and began Hostess' descent into debt. Hostess had lost 1.1 billion dollars by the end of fiscal year 2012, even though they had made 2.5 billion dollars in revenues (Forbes.com). While Hostess is not mass-producing, they are "winding down." This change means that the company is still manufacturing, but on a scale that is microscopic compared to the production of Hostess products four months ago. With this wind down, Hostess plans to keep approximately 3,200 of its employees. Ninety-four percent of the employees were laid off within the first sixteen weeks after the date of bankruptcy. Hostess will have to close thirty-three bakeries, 565 distribution centers, nearly 5,500 delivery routes, 570 bakery outlet stores, and cut 18,500 jobs (Hostessbrands.com).

Hostess also worked on a reorganization of the business as a concern for the future. This process included spending eighteen months negotiating an agreement to lower costs with its key constituents. Hostess had obtained the support of the union, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. When the BCTGM was presented with a new labor contract, it launched a new campaign to cripple the company's operations and force it to liquidate further, though details are sparse. While this wind down continued, the vice presidents of the company and union leaders received compensation from inside the company for the salaries they will no longer be making. There were four vice presidents and the president (who received around a quarter million each), as well as six union bosses (who each received around 1.5 million). That totals over two million dollars. This business failure could and probably will have a trickledown effect on the local economy by increasing the jobless and possibly the homeless population.

So, although Hostess did not serve Twinkies until the company ran out of money, they took the necessary measures to save the wallets of the millions of Hostess stockholders. America now knows how unions can pressure companies and how companies that seem to be strong can collapse quickly without a complete structure. So, although mock products may one day surface in the shopping markets of America, never again will there be a Twinkie.

FEATURES

Surviving ANY Natural Disaster

By Holland Lund

The aftermath of a Gulf hurricane

Some believe that preparing for disasters, natural or man-made, is irrelevant. When in fact the topic is extremely important and should be thought about on at least a weekly basis. I am going to tell you the basics on how to survive ANY natural disaster.

When it happens, you need to get out of the city, but do not go too far. Highways and interstates may be blocked with traffic jams. If so then put on your hiking shoes, grab a bag, and head for the hills, wherever the hills may be. You see, once a city is abandoned it becomes a gold mine for untouched resources. You just have to know where to look. First off, when you get far enough out of the city, set up a temporary base camp that should have supplies to sustain you for a week. Then you wait for a few days and if possible a week. While you are in the city, you need to be as discreet as possible. Move quickly and quietly when you are out in the open. As long as you are in the city, you will have a chance of being spotted by someone else. To avoid being spotted, move about in a way that may not be pretty but it might save your life. Get to a library. Often overlooked by looters, libraries are gold mines for information about city roads, locations, and yes, sewer lines. The sewer lines can be navigated now because of the rain water that has washed them clean. The maps should be around the 900's according to the Dewey Decimal System. By getting around using the sewers, you can move about the city undetected and safely. Your next priority is to find a place for you and whomever you are with to sleep.

Though they might be frightening at night, hospitals are nearly perfect places to set up a base camp. With a diesel-powered back up generator, hospitals can supply power as long as you keep the fuel tank full. You will need to keep the tank full by using bio-diesel. I will tell you how later. Be careful, this is an area where people get into trouble. Before you start the generator, make sure to turn off all of the switches on the circuit breaker. If you do not, then the place will light up like a Christmas tree. That would only draw attention, unwanted attention. When you have found a base camp be sure to pick a place to hide where you have an easy escape; just in case you have an unexpected roommate. NEVER go out of the building the same way you came in. There might be someone waiting just around the corner for you. It is also a good idea to do a security sweep of the building before you hunker down for the night. It would be awkward if you were living near someone and neither of you knew about the other. Another plus about the hospital is the security system. You can now monitor anything and anyone who moves. Once all of this is done it would be a good idea to make a fire. Use rocks to shield the light from doorways, windows and holes in the walls. This way no one can see you, but you can see everyone. Now move on to your next priority, food.

Often families will leave food behind in haste to exit the city. Canned foods will be your best bet. However, if you know how to properly kill and clean animals, be my guest. Search anything or anywhere that might have a possibility of having food in it. Supermarkets, houses, storm shelters, farm houses, barns, sheds, etc. They all have a possibility of having food stored in them. For anyone reading this that prefers salads, you can make a salad. You do so with spinach leaves and berries. Do this only if you know which berries to eat and which berries not to eat. Not every berry is edible. Another way to obtain food would be to head back into the country and steal fresh produce from farmers' fields. This might not be your favorite part of the experience; however, it will keep you alive. It is your choice. Once food is taken care of, then you can move onto your next priority, communications, or COMMS for short.

You may set up COMMS by finding a taxi service or even a vacant truck stop. These locations can be found in phone books, papers, etc. You will need a CB radio, an antenna, and a receiver. You will also need a tape recorder to record a message explaining who you are, and where/when you will be somewhere. Ask for help. However,

(Survival tips continued on page 9)

FEATURES

(Survival tips continued from page 8)

be careful. This is another area that people get into trouble. Get to the spot where you said you would be at least three hours prior. Now set up a spot where you are invisible to whoever is responding to your transmission. If the person or persons look shady, just sit still until they leave. Then move to your next priority, which will be transportation.

When selecting a mode of transportation, remember that you need something strong and trustworthy. A great vehicle for this purpose is an old diesel truck or SUV. Diesel trucks will be more useful for hauling, and diesel vehicles have something that gasoline cars do not. You can make bio-diesel for diesel vehicles. To make bio-diesel find a restaurant and then locate some cooking grease. Next, heat it up and mix it with ethanol that can be found in antifreeze and lye. One can usually find lye in the chemicals used in pesticides. This will give you bio-diesel. While it is not perfect, it will get you from point a to point b for a while.

Navigating the sewer system

If you are prepared and you know how and when to use the techniques above, then you should do fine. Remember, info, food, shelter, COMMS, and transportation. Stay low and out of sight. Be the hunter and try not to be the hunted.

Winter Break Survey Results

By Mark Lillard

1. Did you travel over break?

Yes - 60%
No - 40%
Interesting places visited were Turkey, The Dominican Republic, Spain, Zimbabwe, Africa, and Grand Cayman. A large number of people also visited the beach over break.

2. If you stayed at home, did people travel to you?

Yes - 54.8%
No - 45.2%

3. Which movies did you see?

The Hobbit - 58%
Lincoln - 33%
Zero Dark Thirty - 2%
Parental Guidance - 17%
The Guilt Trip - 7%
Django Unchained - 5%
Les Miserables - 14%
Monsters Inc 3D - 8%
Did not go to the movies - 24%
Notable others- *Jack Reacher, Skyfall,* and *Life of PI*

4. Did you go to the Music City Bowl?

Yes - 29%
No - 71%

5. What was your favorite gift that you received this holiday season?
Top Choices:
15 students: a sports item (i.e. hockey stick or baseball bat)
8 students: IPhone
7 students: IPad
13 students: laptop
15 students: video games
Best Gift: Super Bowl Tickets

7. Are you glad that Alabama won the National Championship?

Yes - 48%
No - 52%
(We are just as divided on sports as we are on politics!)

8. Was Alabama really the best college team this year?

Yes - 66%
No - 34%

9. Is Nick Saban the greatest head coach of all time?

Yes - 19%
No - 81%

10. How would you rate your break on a scale of one to ten?

1. - 0%
2. - 0%
3. - 1%
4. - 1%
5. - 3%
6. - 4%
7. - 15%
8. - 32%
9. - 22%
10. - 22%

SERIALIZATION

Jake and the Tribe: Part Two

By Anonymous

"Allright, Mom, I'm leaving for Luke's house," said Jake as he was opening the front door.

"I'm not so sure about you camping out, Jake. Are Luke and your friends responsible?" asked Jake's mom.

"Of course they are, Mom. Don't you trust me?" asked Jake with a sweet voice. "I'll be late in a few minutes."

"Oh, allright, just wear your helmet."

"Thanks, I'll be back on Sunday," said Jake as he sped out of the house and hopped on his bike. It was Friday afternoon.

As he pulled into Luke's driveway, Jake heard a bunch of guys laughing. "Sorry I'm late, guys. My mom was being over-protective as always."

"No problem, some guys had to cancel too. Only Jack, Rob, and you could make it. Come on, let's get the canoes and get going down the stream."

Rob, Jack, Luke, and Jake loaded their gear that had things like a cooler, tents, sleeping bags, fishing poles, and a overflowing tackle box, into the canoes and slipped it into one of the many streams that led into the Tennessee River. Rob and Jack were in one canoe, and Luke and Jake were in another. "So where did you say we are going?" asked Jake.

"We are going through this stream to an amazing beach that has a deep fishing hole," said Jack. "We call it Hook Escape."

Jake was puzzled, but he gets confused a lot by his friends, so he casually asked, "Why is called Hook Escape?"

"Oh, only because there is a crazy monster catfish that is about four feet long and has been taking our hooks and lures for many years. We call it 'Big Papa Daddy.'" said Rob with a smile. "We're coming to catch it."

After about ten minutes, the boys docked on a beautiful beach. It had a couple of giant sycamores, which provided shade in the back. There were also big flat boulders on the beach too. Shells were everywhere. It looked like a picture from a book. It was perfect.

"Whoa!" Jake shouted. "This is the best place in the world! Back in my old city, no park could top this!"

"I know, right?" asked Luke.

They unpacked their gear, and in less than twenty minutes, the tents were up, and the boys had their fishing lines out. Jake was all smiles. They fished for a couple hours but only caught small bream; it was not impressive.

"You wanna' start the 'dogs?" asked Jack.

"That's a great idea! I'm starved!" said Rob.

As Luke was starting the fire, Jake grabbed some cokes from the mini cooler for the guys. Once the fire was started, the teenagers began to roast their hot dogs. They tasted great. Jake wished he had moved to the town a long time ago. He just seemed made for the woods.

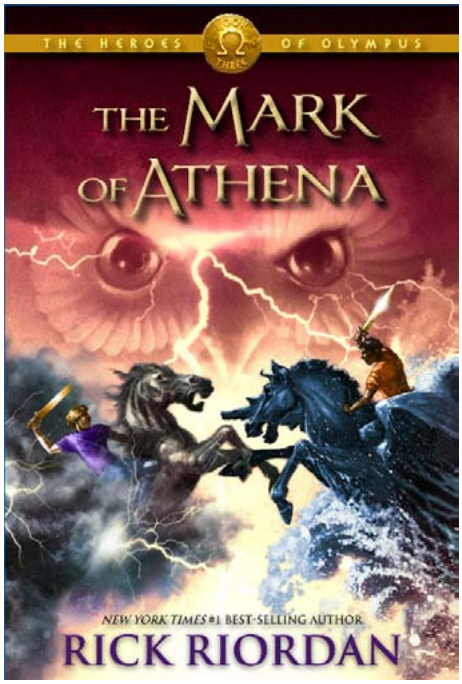
After supper, Jake went back to his fishing pole and chose the juiciest, nastiest, and most wriggly worm he could find in the bait bucket and put it on his hook. He wanted to catch Big Papa Daddy, so that he could prove himself to his friends. His friends were nice and accepting, but he wanted to show them that he was not just an ignorant city boy. He threw out his line; the night was getting dark.

After awhile, Jake started to lose hope and lazily held the pole loose in his hands. Suddenly, he got a massive jerk that pulled him from one of the boulders he was sitting on!

--To be continued . . .

The Top of the Hill is looking for writers for the upcoming March 28th edition. The staff meets every Tuesday during break in Mrs. Roberts' room (M21). All are welcome!

ENTERTAINMENT



Mark of Athena

Reviewed by: DavusBritannicus (follow me on Facebook @ Davus2012)

Let's start by recapping what has happened so far. Hera, the Queen of Olympus, decides to take the leader of Camp Jupiter, (a camp for Roman demigods) Jason Grace, and the leader of Camp Half-Blood, (a camp for Greek demigods) Percy Jackson. The two camps are separate even though they are practically both sons and daughters of the same gods/goddesses because the Greeks didn't like how the Romans modified their gods, and the demigod children have been fighting ever since and switch their lives to unite the two camps to fight against a race of giants who were bred to destroy the gods. No one is aware of this fact except Hera. After Jason's long and arduous quest, Camp Half-Blood figures out Hera's plan. With this new knowledge Jason, Leo Valdez, Piper McClean, and Annabeth Chase set out to Camp Jupiter and New Rome. In the worst peace-advocating ship ever, a Greek warship armed with automatic ballistae and explosive ammo, they descend into Camp Jupiter. Something comes over Leo, and he decides to blow up half of Camp Jupiter. With Romans armed to the teeth and right on their tails, the seven chosen demigods, Jason, Leo, Piper, Annabeth, Frank Zhang, Percy, and Hazel make their cunning escape.

Although this is the best installment of the series, I think it has a few problems with some parts of the book. One example is how evil dolphin-men and Diet Coke were tied together. How is it possible? Also, Frank turns into a giant goldfish in the aquarium (it's a long story on how he can do that). He can turn into anything, anything at all, and he turns into a goldfish. They're not even intimidating or useful in any way! And you have to feel bad for Leo. He is left out of just about everything. He is called "the seventh wheel." The prophecy couldn't add one more to make even pairs? That's probably the worst thing. I feel sorry for Leo because he is pretty cool. Also, like all Disney things before it, everything goes perfect for the heroes. Percy gets smashed with a ten-foot-long spear and still has the energy to take down two giants. That made me laugh. At the end of the book, when the huge fall happens, if you read it you know what I mean, the suspense almost kills me. I am already impatient for the next installment.

This book did have its upswings too though. It is extremely well written. I understood everything that happens without racking my brain and going to English help session. For a brief plot summary: seven quests, giants killed, and Epic win (Latin translation in honor of me, the vilicus- Septemquaestu. occideregigantum. Epicivictoria) Also, Jason and Percy are just awesome. Who else can single-handedly take down two twelve-foot tall, snake-foot, demon giants in their own arena? On another note, my favorite character is Frank. I can't stop laughing at him. He gets his pants stolen by a pool table helicopter named Buford as well as turning into a giant koi goldfish. This is the best book I have ever read, and if you want more of it, go read it yourself. It is a guaranteed good time read for all.

ENTERTAINMENT

Halo 4 Review

By John Dugan

Master Chief

Five years ago, Bungie released one of the most important and influential video games ever to grace a system, *Halo 3*. Never before had a game caused such a cultural connection among people and popularized the functionality of online gaming. The *Halo* series as a whole is responsible for the exponential growth of the video game industry in the recent decade. The main character of the series, Master Chief, has become the illustrious icon of video games and is known by all. *Halo* has even spread across different forms of media such as books, comics, movies, and more. Bungie has carried on the series legacy after the original trilogy with a prequel, *Halo: Reach*, and a side story game, *Halo 3:ODST*, that takes place during the events of *Halo 2*. However, in 2010, Bungie became an independent company and passed the honor of making these revolutionary titles to a new company, 343 Industries. *Halo 4* was announced during the summer of 2011, and from the start, enormous expectations were put upon the developers. Gamers wondered whether 343 Industry could live up to the benchmark laid down by their celebrated predecessors. It can be confidently said that *Halo 4* has delivered what was promised and more.

Presentation

All the new graphical leaps and bounds made by recent video game titles have amazed gamers with beautiful visuals, colors, and impeccable detail, but no one has experienced the definition of extraordinary graphics on consoles until he has played *Halo 4*. While playing the game, the gamer might feel as if he is looking through a real life window into a world that looks like it could be more than just a video on a screen. Holograms have depth; all surfaces have distinct ridges and curves; and people in the game look identical to ones in real life. There is no other way to stress the looks of this game other than to strongly advise playing it.

Sound

As with all *Halo* games, *Halo 4* has a fully orchestrated soundtrack full of emotional tones that depict the true feel of the game. Scenes are often full of beautiful music that bring key moments to life while sometimes the ambiance of an area is enough to submerge the gamer into a realistic experience. The most astonishing aspects about the sound in this game are its sound effects. Each gun sounds like it would in real life, ranging from a loud boom to a silenced ripple of a sniper bullet. The way *Halo 4* structures its sound produces some of the best moments in the entire *Halo* series.

Gameplay

Halo 4's gameplay is great and seamless when it comes to most subjects. The AI in this game is very smart and calculating, ready to punish you on any mistake you make. The Legendary difficulty has never been more difficult, and many gamers will find that even on the normal difficulty there will be problems retaining health and not being crushed by a horde of elites. There is a multitude of different control schemes that can be chosen depending on the style of the individual gamer. Vehicles are awesome once again and tear up the battlefield, and each gun has a cool, slick new look and feel. One of my few complaints about the game, though, is its lack of weapon variety. Each human rifle, sniper, and assault rifle has its "Promethean" and Covenant counter part, but that is the problem. None of them feel any different in combat other than their looks. Regardless of that, *Halo 4* will provide any player with the satisfaction of beating down his opponents or picking them off one by one with a sniper.

Story

The important requirement of a good story in a video game like *Halo* has not been soiled in the fourth installment of the series. The cliffhanger at the end of *Halo 3* as the Forward Unto Dawn drifted towards an unknown planet left many fans wondering where Master Chief was at the end of his initial journey. Without giving away any spoilers, *Halo 4* is a much more personal story than any other *Halo* title and deals with internal subplots with the two main characters, Master Chief and his AI, Cortana. Chief's emotions are put on full display during this chapter of the series where he is not only fighting for the preservation of the human race but also his best friend who has followed him from the beginning of the series. The only complaint I have with the story is its quick length, only taking about 7 to 8 hours to complete. The first chapter of the "Reclaimer" series has begun.

Multiplayer

Halo 4 multiplayer is back and

(continued on the bottom of page 13)

ENTERTAINMENT

Assassin's Creed III

By Reilly Dodd

Story

The game begins as Desmond Miles finally reaches the cave of the First Civilization and slips into a coma-like state where he goes back to Haythan Kenway, his ancestor. After much climbing, stabbing, and shooting, we learn that Haythan has been trying to open the same cave as mentioned before, but when he fails to open it, he gives up and then goes on with his life. Then we learn that he has a child who was raised with Native Americans. Desmond then wakes up to find himself in the Animus and, he has to find a power source for the machine that could save the world. Before heading off to do that, Desmond slips into the Animus to continue the story. As the child (Connor) grows up, he becomes an assassin and learns that he must fight for the colonies in the American Revolution.

Gameplay

The gameplay has been tweaked and added to, mainly because now guns can be used. For example, you can press A next to a Redcoat when a firing line is assembling and use him as a meat shield. Another thing is that they demolished the old health system and replaced it with a regenerative one. One more new mechanic is that they also assigned the shoot button to Y and added a new weapon wheel so that you can pull off combos like a tomahawk poison dart counter attack. One issue that I have seen though is that the AI seems to have been downgraded. To explain, you can squat in a bush half as high as you, call a Redcoat over, circle around him, and then run away into a tree to hang the Lobsterback on a nearby tree while his allies are still looking in the bushes. On another note, I have found my share of glitches like horses not being able to jump over a rock, and other entities having random moving blood spots or just holes of darkness on them. My second favorite glitch is that if one of your allies picks up a box, you can turn around and see it spazz out and pass through dead bodies, walls, or even you. My favorite glitch has to be wagons in the game sometimes act as black holes and suck up the dead or living corpses and make them flail their limbs. One last thing is the naval combat. It flows well, does not take long to learn, and has its own missions and upgrades to buy and play.

Verdict

Although *Assassin's Creed III* has been known to have its own share of glitches and flaws, it is an overall good game with a new combat system and a much larger map for you to explore. You should definitely pick it up. I give it a 8.5 out of 10 on account of the glitches and poor AI.

(Halo 4 continued from page 12)

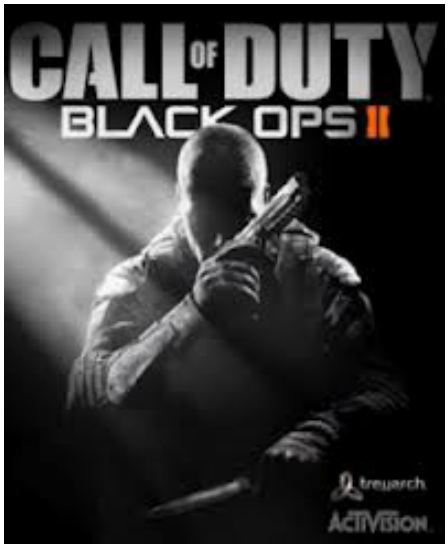
better than ever. New weapons, armor, and titles have been added that enhance the experience of this landmark online activity. Many features have also been borrowed from the popular *Call of Duty* series like the points system, but *Halo's* multiplayer is still very different from its competitor. The forge mode, where you can edit your own maps, is as impressive and fun as ever, and the new feature, Spartan Ops, will keep you and your friends occupied for months. New downloads are also constantly being released reviving endless options with even more. Have fun exploiting every one of your opponent's moves as they are thrown off the map by your gravity hammer in 3…2….1!

Conclusion

Halo 4 is one of the best games that has been released on the Xbox 360 in recent years, and there are many great games on that list. The visuals, engaging story, endless multiplayer, and lasting addictiveness make *Halo 4* fit to be compared even with the greats of the franchise such as *Halo 3* and *Halo: Reach*. The legacy of Halo has once again been treated with worthy installments that break the bounds of conventional video games and rival the best of the industry. After eleven years since its original release, *Halo* still stands in a league of its own with few games able to challenge it in greatness. We have a new *Halo* series to look forward to.

Rubric (on a scale of 10)
Presentation- 10
Sound- 10
Gameplay- 9.5
Story- 9.8
Multiplayer- 10
Overall-9.9

ENTERTAINMENT



Call of Duty: Black Ops II

By Jackson Maradik
(Campaign Section by John Dugan)

Ever since the reveal trailer was released on May 1, 2012, *Call of Duty: Black Ops II* was the "talk" surrounding the video game world up through its release on November 13, 2012. Hype pertaining to new and old aspects expected to be on the game got many people, including myself, pumped up for the release. The game has three major modes: Multiplayer, Campaign, and Zombies, which all wrap around the idea of war in 2025.

Multiplayer

For those who do not know, Multiplayer is the most popular mode in *Call of Duty*, which allows players to play against each other using different types of guns and score streaks to rack up enough points to win a match. The player's goal, other than to win, is to gain experience points (XP) to level up his player until 55. You can then "prestige," which means to start over on level one. Overall, there are ten prestiges.

The maps in *Black Ops II* range from big to small and are set in places all over the world. There are fifteen maps: Aftermath, Cargo, Carrier, Drone, Express, Hijacked, Meltdown, Overflow, Plaza, Raid, Slums, Standoff, Turbine, Yemen, and Nuketown 2025, which you can only play if you preordered the game. Of these fifteen, my favorite map has to be Hijacked. Taking place on an anchored cruise ship in the middle of the ocean, Hijacked is a relatively small map with many places to camp (unfortunately), snipe, and get lots of kills.

The feature known as Create-a-Class has changed dramatically. Instead of forcing the gamer to have one primary, one secondary, three perks, a tactical equipment, and lethal equipment, *Black Ops II* gives the player the freedom to put whatever he wants in a class, as long as it is within ten items. For example, you can have no secondary but instead carry two grenades. You can also have nothing except a knife and six perks. Create-a-Class also offers the gamer the use of a wildcard, which does take up an item, but allows the player to have more than three perks or carry two lethal grenades. Currently, this is the class I have been using throughout my Multiplayer experience with *Black Ops II*: PDW-57 laser sight fore grip (Primary), B23R (Secondary), Flak Jacket (Perk 1), Fast Hands (Perk 2), Dexterity (Perk 3), Frag Grenade (Lethal), and x2 Concussion Grenades (Tactical).

Campaign

The *Call of Duty* series has never been known for its stellar campaigns, but this new edition to the franchise might have gamers' thinking differently. Never before has a *Call of Duty* game taken place in the future and also has never featured branching storylines. Choices you make in the campaign have severe repercussions that affect the ending to each gamer's story. *Black Ops II* is a direct sequel to *Black Ops*, and like its predecessor, it has an engaging story filled with allusions to the past and vivid depictions of the future. The story is centered on Alex Mason and Frank Woods in the Cold War mission, the protagonists of the first game, and Alex's son, David, in the futuristic missions. The conflict of the game is the race to stop a terrorist, Raul Menendez, preaching the destruction of the superpowers of the world on "Cordis Die." The main characters must fight to stop Menendez's plans and save the world from utter destruction. Some outcomes of the game vary from the success of their goal or unparalleled failure. *Black Ops II* is one of the best campaigns I have played recently, and it definitely surpasses previous installments of the series. The campaign will give every player a little something different, depending on his or her choices and procedure.

Zombies

Many people have been looking forward to the revamped zombies mode, which takes skill, logic, and precision to survive in. The only thing similar between the zombie's story and the campaign story is that they are both placed in 2025. Although you cannot play a zombies campaign, it still does have a story behind it. Zombies is set in a post-apocalyptic world where missiles were fired at Earth from the moon containing chemical 115, which turn humans or animals into zombies. Most people end up either being killed or becoming the undead. For the first time ever, Zombies are being built into a multiplayer engine, which allows more players and more game modes.

In Zombies, there are three major game types: Grief, TranZit, and Survival. Grief can also be classified as 4z4, or four players vs. zombies vs. another four players. The objective

(continued on the bottom of page 15)

FEATURES

Duck Dynasty

By Jake Evans

A&E'S *Duck Dynasty* is one of TV's hottest shows. It follows the Robertson family of West Monroe, Louisiana in their wild and explosive lives as the owners of the multi-million dollar duck call making company, Duck Commander. They have changed the faces of A&E and rednecks everywhere. The show mainly follows Duck Commander CEO Willie Robertson, and his employee/brother, Jase Robertson. Other co-stars who make appearances on this show are their father, mother, Uncle Phil, Miss Kay, and Si respectively. Whether it's in the warehouse, at Phil and Miss Kay's house, or out in the woods, whoever is in the scene is sure to give you a laugh. Each episode is full of hunting, good food, life lessons taught to the grandkids, and hilarious stunts and projects by the Duck Commander staff.

Most people who watch *Duck Dynasty* would agree with me in saying Si Robertson is the funniest character on the show. He is a Vietnam veteran who is supposed to make the reeds for their duck calls. He frequently naps, never works, and always has an excuse, including the words "Hey" and "Jack," while holding his Tupperware cup full of sweet tea. Phil is the grandfather who is the face of Duck Commander and duck hunting in Louisiana. He played quarterback at Louisiana Tech but decided that he didn't want to play football because it would interfere with duck season. This decision allowed future NFL Hall of Fame QB Terry Bradshaw to step up for Louisiana Tech and jumpstart his very successful football career. Willie is often uptight, and the one who breaks up most of the Duck Commander staff's fun. Jase is the mastermind behind most of the staff's antics.

The crew's shenanigans range from making a redneck waterpark and a real life fruit ninja ring to shooting themselves down a handmade conveyor belt and eating almost fifty donuts each in an interfamily contest. Other stunts they have taken part in are turning an old RV into a duck blind ten feet in the air, going above and beyond the call of duty while doing the Christmas lights for Phil and Miss Kay, and Willie and Si being Santa and the elf at the church's Christmas party.

Duck Dynasty is immensely hilarious, full of life lessons, and a great rags-to-riches story. Nevertheless, this show unfortunately is not completely

genuine. The producers have allegedly scripted some of the segments in the show and these staged situations are easy to detect in various scenes. Regardless of the scripted writing, I would still recommend this show to anyone who hasn't seen it because it is very funny and entertaining.

(Black-Ops II continued from page 14)

of this game type is for your team of four to be the last team standing. Neither team can do anything to affect the other team, so the only way to win is by surviving the zombies. The second game mode or TranZit is the most involved storyline of the three types. TranZit is a four-person game where you either run or ride a bus to different locations finding new guns while zombies are after you.

TranZit is the most upbeat and, in my opinion, the most fun of the three types. Last but not least, Survival is your typical zombie game from *World-at-War* and original *Black Ops*. Up to four players stay within one map trying to upgrade guns and hold off the undead that are climbing through barriers in the walls.

Rating and Final Word

One of the main questions people ask is how different is *Black Ops II* from any of the other *Call of Dutys*. Basically, all of the recent *Call of Duty* games have either been in the past or present, but never in the future. *Black Ops II* opens up many options to what Activision can do with game-types, stories, and more.

Overall, I see this game on a 10-point scale as outstanding - somewhere between a 9 and 10. I enjoyed every aspect of the game and was hooked as soon as I played my first multiplayer match. *Black Ops II* is available on Xbox 360, PlayStation 3, Wii U, and PC priced at $59.99 for the regular game, or $79.99 for the Hardened Edition. Good hunting!

ENTERTAINMENT

Star Wars: A New Disney

By Peter Taylor

On October 30, 2012, The Walt Disney Company announced plans to acquire Lucasfilm and its hit science fiction franchise, *Star Wars*, for more than four billion dollars. They also announced plans to make three more *Star Wars* movies, beginning with *Episode VII* in 2015.

Yes, folks, you read that correctly. Disney is going to be making *Star Wars Episodes VII, VIII*, and *IX*. As the *Top of the Hill*'s resident *Star Wars* fanboy, I am going to take a look at the good and the bad sides of this controversial and much talked about business decision and decide whether we want Disney to make three more *Star Wars* movies.

The most attractive piece of the whole thing is that these next few movies will be a continuation of the original *Star Wars* trilogy. Many casual fans have always wondered what happens to Luke, Han, Leia, Chewbacca, and other classic *Star Wars* characters. According to George Lucas, these movies will be set a few decades after the original trilogy, will provide information on what happens to the original characters as well as introducing a brand new cast of main characters. This could also be considered a downside by some, including me, because these movies could wipe out all of the continuity established by the novels written after *Return of the Jedi*. The stories about what happens to these characters have already been told, and it has been confirmed that it will follow an original story and not any of the novels. However, there is a period in the timeline of nearly eighty years where the fates of the main movie characters are unexplored. If the movies are safely placed in this era, wrap up the fates of the main characters, who must be placed firmly in supporting roles, and introduce a new cast without messing up the timeline established by the novels, these new movies could turn out very interestingly.

To most, the worst aspect of this deal is that Disney is making the new movies. With a few notable exceptions, Disney has a reputation for family-friendly and relatively unexciting movies, and many believe that Disney is not the right company to tackle *Star Wars*. I originally believed that myself, but I did some research and uncovered the fact that Disney owns Marvel. The recently released *Avengers*, a completely new type of Disney movie and a really good movie in its own right, could serve as a blueprint for more mature and action-based movies such as *Star Wars*. Disney also has access to the talented writer/director Joss Whedon, who could be a fantastic candidate for directing the films. They have also secured Michael Arndt, writer of the Academy Award winning script, *Little Miss Sunshine*, to write the seventh film, and original *Empire Strikes Back* writer Lawrence Kasdan to write the eighth and ninth. I firmly believe, with the *Avengers* as proof, that if Disney puts a talented director on the project with a love for the original trilogy, it could turn out to be a worthy successor to the original trilogy, which are, in my opinion, some of the greatest films ever made.

A few other details changed my mind that the movies might not turn out badly; chief among them is that Mark Hamill, portrayer of Luke Skywalker, and Harrison Ford, portrayer of Han Solo, are interested in re-appearing. These movies have the potential to fall flat, but they also have the potential to be amazing.

Cartoon by Ben Gauldin

ENTERTAINMENT

An Overhaul of an Old Occupation: Bond Reinvented

By Peter Taylor

Skyfall, the twenty-third installment of the James Bond franchise, was released in the United States on November 6, 2012. It was instantly met with great praise by critics and fans alike, being declared a reinvention of the franchise, some even calling it the best Bond film of all. For those unfamiliar with the franchise (first, please move to planet Earth), the James Bond films, based on Ian Fleming's novels, follow the exploits of a British spy on his escapades as he defeats diabolical villains, triggers giant explosions, and gets the girl (who always seems to die in the end). Beginning in 1962 with *Dr. No*, Sean Connery originally played the eponymous main character, but since then, six different actors have portrayed the character. Daniel Craig is the most recent, beginning with 2006's *Casino Royale*, which rebooted the franchise, allowing it to portray the beginning of Bond's career as a spy as well as place modern technology, like the Internet, into the films without having a huge inconsistency (James Bond is roughly the same age in *GoldenEye* as he is in *Thunderball*, though they were made nearly thirty years apart, and the technology present in the film is drastically different).

So, does *Skyfall* live up to the hype, or does it fall flat like the title? (Keep in mind, I have only seen a few full James Bond movies, including this one, and I have seen bits and pieces of numerous others. I cannot completely judge it by comparing it to earlier films.)

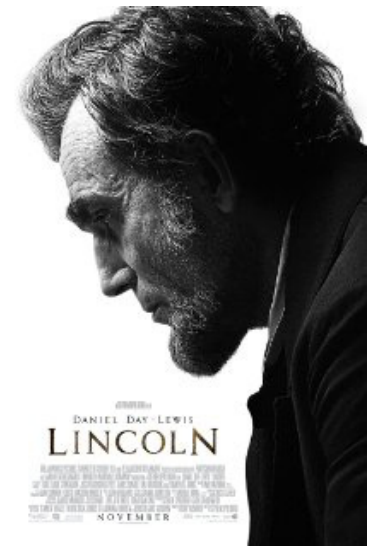
The Good: The strongest point of the film is the acting. Daniel Craig as James Bond is phenomenal, and he shows a darker, more vulnerable side of the character better than most of the previous actors' films, without sacrificing the Sean Connery level of humor that was mostly absent in *Casino Royale*. The script contains the perfect level of campiness and one liners without subtracting from the film's overall dark and serious tone. Javier Bardem as Raoul Silva, the film's main villain, is also fantastic, as well as other solid performances by Judi Dench as M, Naomi Watts as Eve, and Ralph Fiennes as Garith Mallory. The plot line is well laid out and constructed, though there is one scene that I found particularly predictable, but I will not spoil it just in case. Sam Mendes' direction is fantastic, and the camera angles and dark colors add a noir element to the film. You can tell that Mendes really learned from Christopher Nolan and the *Dark Knight* about how to reinvent a film in a very interesting way. The action sequences are thrilling and very well done as well.

The Bad: Now here's the real kicker: *Skyfall* is definitely a great film, one of the top ten films of the year. However, the film partially suffers in the James Bond aspects that we've all come to expect from a Bond film. First off, there is not really a true Bond girl. There is one woman who kind of looks like she will be a Bond girl, but she turns out not to be. Though Q, Bond's supplier of equipment and cool gadgets, returns after a noted absence in Craig's Bond films, he provides Bond with only two gadgets, neither of which are very cool gadgets as much as they are regular tools that any spy would have. The film makes fun of this situation in a brief dialogue exchange between Q and Bond, which shows that the filmmakers obviously did this for a reason. Overall, the only true bad part of the film is that, while a great film, it does not really follow the traditions of the old Bond films. Rather it reinvents the franchise for future Bond Movies to come

The Verdict: Overall, *Skyfall* is a great film, one of the best of the year. It takes what *Casino Royale* did to begin to reinvent the Bond franchise and finishes the job. Daniel Craig's performance as Bond is great, and Sam Mendes really learned a lot from recent action films about how to reinvent a much loved franchise successfully and how to change the mood from a light-hearted action flick to a dramatic action thriller, while still retaining enough humor that it isn't completely unrecognizable. However, in the process, this overhaul left out some of the classic aspects of the Bond movies such as cool gadgets and a Bond girl. Overall, the film may not be the best Bond movie in relation to the rest of the films in the series, but it is definitely one of the best, if not the absolute best, movie of the franchise. If the next Bond film, which will again star Craig as Bond, adds a few more cool gadgets and a true Bond girl (who will probably die), we will have the perfect Bond movie, if this is not it already. Rating: 9.5/10

(Also, the theme song by Adele was great, though nothing can beat Shirley Bassey's "Goldfinger.")

ENTERTAINMENT



Lincoln: The Perfect Mesh of History and Entertainment

By Mike Miccioli

The film *Lincoln* directed by Steven Spielberg is an outstanding movie, which craftily displays the passing of the Thirteenth Amendment. Spielberg uses great historical detail while including a touch of humor. The movie focuses primarily on President Lincoln's battle to persuade twenty House Democrats to vote for the amendment and secure a unanimous vote from the Republicans. The film does not focus on his whole presidency, but rather covers a period of time of less than a year from late 1864 to early 1865.

Daniel Day-Lewis does a superb job portraying Abraham Lincoln and gives the audience an authentic feel for what our sixteenth president would have been like. President Lincoln blends banter and storytelling into his political conversations which helps him influence others, while negotiating. This talent also makes the film a little bit more cheerful in its serious atmosphere.

Sally Field is also stellar in her performance as Mary Todd Lincoln. As Mrs. Lincoln, she plays a character who has been mentally unstable since the death of her son, William Lincoln, and is getting worse since her other son, Robert, is trying to join the army. Other actors who I think do noteworthy jobs include Joseph Gordon-Levitt as Robert Lincoln, James Spader as W.N. Bilbo, and Tommy Lee Jones as Thaddeus Stevens, who is the wittiest character in the movie.

The predominant theme of the movie is that Lincoln has to use his savvy political skills and extraordinary leadership to get the Thirteenth Amendment passed. Many of the Conservative Republicans only want to end the Civil War and will support the amendment only if it is absolutely necessary in order to restore peace. To get the entire Conservative vote, Lincoln has to agree to attempt to negotiate for peace with the Confederates. However, it seems that the Confederates will agree to surrender if the Thirteenth Amendment is discarded. This situation places Lincoln in a dilemma: he would have to postpone peace negotiations and the end of the war in order to pass the amendment. This scenario is agonizing because Lincoln knows how devastating the war is to our country; however, he also knows how important the Amendment is for the future of our country.

The Abolitionists want to have equal rights for blacks, such as the right to vote and run for office in addition to abolishing slavery. Lincoln needs them to restrain from pushing for full rights and focus on ending slavery first. This plan helps keep support from the Conservatives. In the movie, Lincoln explains this to Abolitionists by using Euclid's Transitive Property theorem (which we learned in Coach Qian's class): if a=b and c=b, then a=c. This theoreum represents that if the whites were equal under the law and blacks were equal under the law, then the blacks were equal to the whites.

Lastly, Lincoln needs twenty Democrats to vote in favor of the amendment. Since elections had just been held, there are plenty of lame ducks. Lincoln has several people offer jobs to lame ducks under the condition that they will vote in favor of the Amendment. The last several votes are no easy task as Lincoln has to get involved himself.

Lincoln is an exceptional movie as to be expected from Steven Spielberg. I recommend this film to anyone who is interested in learning more about our country's history.

ENTERTAINMENT

Life Of Pi: The Movie

By Ben Rosenthal

Caution: Will contain some spoilers (what you would see in a preview or trailer and a few others)

In 2006, *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel was the all-school-read at MBA. To put that in perspective, the 7th graders that year are now our graduating class of seniors. Imagine them, trembling, as they are faced with the 350 page burden also known as summer reading when they stepped into MBA's hallways for the first time. As long as it is, the story did not become the all-school-read for no reason. The compelling storyline led to the tale being made into a movie six years later. I saw the movie with 9th grader Matt Remke, and afterward, we left the theater shaking, trembling, and most importantly, grinning. I asked him to sum up the movie quickly, and he said: "It had an interesting and powerful storyline, but the animations and effects were the best part." While I disagree with the second half of his statement, the effects were spectacular and reminded me of *Avatar*, only set on Earth. I believe that the tremendous story of a struggle for power, the will to live, and the presence of God are what defines this movie as one of the best, if not the best, I have ever seen. I realize that you may still have no clue what this story is about, so let me fill you in.

The movie begins when an author is trying to get inspiration for a new book and has been referred to a man named Pi. He is told that Pi had a story that would make him "believe in God." So yes, this movie has nothing to do with delicious dessert and relatively little to do with pi, the number. The main character, Piscine "Pi" Patel, developed his nickname after tiring of the double-entendre made of his name (which has to do with the pronunciation of his first name). He lives in Pondicherry, India, and his parents run the zoo there. He has Hindu parents but also learns the way of Islam and Christianity (in his present life he teaches Jewish texts at a university as well). Because of political issues, his family decides to move to Canada to start a new life. A few days into their voyage on a Japanese cargo ship, a massive storm hits. A combination of the thirty-foot waves, powerful wind, and piercing rain causes the ship to sink. Pi's family is drowned when their cabin fills with water, but Pi is able to escape and make it onto a life raft. Unfortunately for Pi, so do a hyena and a zebra, which breaks its leg when jumping into the raft. Later, an orangutan floats in on a pile of bananas, and Richard Parker manages to get on, too. Richard Parker is not an ordinary human. In fact, he isn't even human at all. He is the Bengal tiger held in the zoo, and Pi does not know he is on the raft. In three brutal scenes the zebra and orangutan are killed by the hyena, and the hyena is killed by the tiger. Before the tiger can hurt him, Pi manages to make a life raft of sorts and attach himself to the boat and stay away. Pi encounters many struggles, including losing his supplies, but he is able to tame the tiger.

The story has amazing effects ,too. The motions and appearance of the tiger are phenomenal, and the same goes for the many other animals. One scene that stands out occurs when Pi looks into Richard Parker's eyes, and he sees his journey to that point. He sees sea animals, in which he views a giant squid attacking a whale, symbolizing animal violence, and he sees all the zoo animals dead in the water. More layers follow, ending with the ship at the bottom of the ocean. Other scenes include a whale jumping out of the water, flying fish, and the cool effects of the reflection of the water on the sky. Pi has to find courage to tame the tiger but also to stay alive and keep a focused mind. The intriguing part though is the viewer gets to choose how to interpret the film for himself, which I thought was awesome. I am giving this movie 4.9 stars out of 5 because it was nearly perfect, but some scenes are very loud and frightening.

ENTERTAINMENT

Breaking Dawn Part II: Why?

By Drew Powell

First of all, why would you name your child Renesmee? It makes no sense. You could have named your child anything, but you name her Renesmee. If vampires don't breathe, then why did I watch Bella, Edward, and at least two other vampires stop to catch their breath? I would think the director would be smart enough to notice that mistake before he released the movie to theatres. This movie had so many flaws that I lost count; I'm not exaggerating, I literally lost count somewhere between 10 and 42. Bella just woke up from almost dying while giving birth to her baby, Renesmee, and yet she is able to beat one of the biggest men I have ever seen in my entire life in an arm wrestling competition. The vampire she beats is very strong; he is able to lift the rock used for the arm wrestling competition. Another flaw was they said vampires don't have blood. The Cullens even use this to prove the point that Renesmee is not an immortal child because she has the blush of blood in her face, but I could see the "blush" in every vampire's faces. One thing I really don't understand is if vampires and werewolves hate each other, then why does Jacob, a werewolf, fall in love with Renesmee? Jacob talks about how much he hates vampires, but he is best friends with two vampires. Another thing on a growing list of complaints that bothered me was that Renesmee wasn't even played by a person, she was animated. She did not look real whatsoever, and that really bothered me.

This movie was a little creepy, too. Apparently the only way to kill a vampire is to rip off its head and burn its body. The way the movie depicted heads being ripped off was very graphic and did not leave anything for the viewer to imagine. One person even has his head ripped off from the mouth instead of the neck. The Volturi, a rival clan of vampires, are known for being very violent and not listening. When the Cullens find out the Volturi are planning to kill Renesmee because she is believed to be an immortal child, they gather witnesses to try and explain the situation to the Volturi. If they knew the Volturi were violent, why didn't they assemble an army to fight the Volturi instead of trying to negotiate with them? It makes no sense to me. Apparently, they did the right thing, because the leader of the Volturi was convinced by a witness that Renesmee wasn't an immortal child. Just moments before this decision, the leader, Aro, was planning to kill the Cullens and their witnesses.

This movie had its highs and its lows, but the lows greatly outweighed the highs. Overall, this movie was not very good, and I have heard that it was the best of the five. Unless you are going to this movie with friends or girls, or you are a Twihard, I would not recommend you see this movie unless you want to waste your money or lose your sanity.

Windows 8 Review

By Matt Braun

Just three years after Microsoft released its acclaimed operating system, Windows 7, Microsoft has recently released their new edition, hoping that it may match its predecessor. Microsoft has created a balanced hybrid between Windows 7 and a tablet.

Windows 8's GUI, or Graphical User Interface, is identical to Windows 7 with a few changes; the start menu and the overall theme of Windows have been significantly changed. The start menu has been completely redone, giving it the feel of a touchscreen that could be seen on a modern smartphone. The start menu is also a fully customizable dashboard in which widgets, applications, and reminders can be added. A nice feature to this operating system is its support for touchscreens, and it seems that Microsoft's main goal with this operating system is to emulate a tablet such as the iPad. Its unique picture password allows for a fun and interesting way to unlock a device. In Windows 7, if you had multiple monitors, the taskbar would only be on one of them. However, with Windows 8, you can choose to have the taskbar on every monitor you use. Windows 8 even has SkyDrive, which is a very nice tool to have to backup files just in case the device crashes and all its contents are lost. Windows 8 enables automatic file uploads, which can save time and the hassle of uploading them. In addition, Windows 8 has improved the startup time of the device so the user does not have to spend time waiting for the computer to boot up.

Overall, Windows 8 has some very unique and interesting features that will boost it to the top of the leaderboards.

ENTERTAIMENT

Citizen Kane

By Peter Taylor

In the first installment of Classic Movies Revisited, I'm going to take a look at Orson Welles's 1941 masterpiece *Citizen Kane*. Universally hailed by critics and film historians alike, *Citizen Kane* is generally considered one of the greatest films ever made. When movie critic, Gene Siskel, was asked his favorite movie, he replied with "*Citizen Kane*. That's the official answer." *Citizen Kane* is considered groundbreaking in many aspects and was one of the first films to use many techniques that are now common in cinema today, such as the use of flashbacks and newsreels to tell a story, deep focus, and many unorthodox camera angles. Though critics and film buffs revere the film, some average viewers have a hard time wrapping their heads around why the film is so great. I'm going to dissect the film piece by piece, and find out if it really deserves all the praise it receives. When you are talking about the "greatest movie ever made," it's hard to know where to start. So I'll start with what the average moviegoer pays attention to most: plot.

The plot of *Citizen Kane* is relatively simple: wealthy businessman, Charles Foster Kane, dies alone at his estate, uttering one last word before dying: "Rosebud." It is up to Jerry Thompson, a news reporter, to figure out what exactly "Rosebud" means in an effort to truly understand the life of Kane. The plot is revealed through flashbacks, usually through interviews with friends and associates of Kane. I won't spoil what "Rosebud" means, because the reveal is pretty cool. The main complaint about the film by moviegoers is that it is boring. While I did not find it all that boring, it definitely is not an exciting film. If you want an exciting movie, check out *Die Hard* or *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. The plot is not ridiculously inventive, but the way it is presented is very creative. There is one specific scene where Thompson reads someone's will, and it fades to a flashback. This type of scene, where written word is conveyed using a flashback is now very common in modern cinema. The acting is really good. The star is Orson Welles, who also directs the film. *Citizen Kane* was his first film, but he had been leading a theater troupe for years before he made the film. Many of the films' actors were members of this theater troupe, and this film marked their screen debut. They all have solid performances, but Orson Welles is the one who truly shines, as he portrays Kane, a man who quickly becomes wealthy, but then loses it all, including his happiness. One great scene occurs when one of Kane's friends, drunk during the scene, stumbles on a word; instead of the director's cutting the scene, the actor continues, as one would in a theatre production. The result of the scene is very cool. Now to what the film is famous for: the camera work and cinematography.

A quick definition for those who are not in the know, cinematography is the planning and placing of camera shots. This method includes zooming in and out, focus and resolution, and, partly, where the shots are placed. A film's cinematographer, in this case Gregg Tolland, is essentially the director's second in command and advisor in terms of cinematography and camera placement. If taken in the correct context, the cinematography in this film is truly amazing. There is one shot that is so low the filmmakers had to dig a hole in the ground so they could get low enough to shoot the angle. Another very famous scene begins with the camera focused on young Kane outside the window. As it zooms out, you begin to see everything inside the house clearly, but you still see Kane crystal clear. This technique, known as deep focus, has since become a widely used tool in cinema. Even though we have all seen it, in the original context, it is still really cool to watch.

So what's the verdict? Is the film really the greatest ever made? Not in my opinion. I have favorites that I'd place over this movie (*The Godfather*, *Star Wars*, *The Dark Knight*, and *Casablanca*); however, I do believe it is a great film. Though it has a slow, fairly simple, and occasionally boring plot, the acting and the way the plot is unveiled is great, and the cinematography and camera work are unsurpassed, even in modern times. I do not know if it is the greatest movie ever made, but it is surely up there. I would recommend this classic film to anyone interested in film history or just wanting to look through some cool camera angles.

A scene from Citizen Kane

Rating: 10/10

SPORTS

R.A. Dickey- The Knuckleballer

By Andrew Kaplan

Robert Allen Dickey is a great athlete as well as a great man. Whether the task is to pitch consecutive one-hitters or climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro, R.A. lives with a sense of integrity and authenticity on his journey to a perfect knuckleball. The pitch is a last attempt pitch, one that pitchers come to when they have nothing left. Dickey had nothing left. After floating through the minors with brief stints in the major league, he faced retirement, but with a will to win, he found his way to the 2012 NL Cy Young.

On November 21, less than a week removed from winning his award, Dickey visited his former school Montgomery Bell Academy, which he attended from 7th grade throughout high school. He spoke to alumni and their sons, many of whom are current students on the Hill. The message R.A. brought was that his award was no easy ride, and that his relationships with others gave him breaks when he needed them most. He would spend hours a day perfecting his knuckleball and his uncanny work ethic eventually paid off.

Life has never been so rewarding for Dickey. He talked about how he and his family never gave up hope during his AAA years. Dickey's autobiograph, *Whenever I Wind Up My Quest for Truth, Authenticity, and the Perfect Knuckleball*, describes his abusive childhood and the ways that he made it to MBA and further. It is apparent through his writing of his early days as a child and the years at MBA where his career began that R.A. worked harder than anyone else on the field. He had decent velocity as a high schooler, but wasn't fast enough to become a conventional professional pitcher. He writes, "It is during my seventh-grade year at Montgomery Bell Academy, in Nashville, that people first notice me."

Life only began to spin downward from there. "And when it all goes haywire. Five years pass before I make the big leagues, a cup of coffee so brief I don't even have time to add cream and sugar." Dickey's persistence to become a major league pitcher never waned. He spent seven years playing triple A ball, where "I tell them I don't want to be mayor I want to be in the majors." He begins to get older; he is brought into the Ranger's farm system, where he is called marginal. This word is one R.A. does not like to hear, as he writes, "When you spend seven years in the same minor league location, when you log almost fourteen years and three hundred games in the minors overall, you're not on what you'd call the fast track." R.A. is told he is nothing, no good for professional ball. He does not take this as an answer.

The knuckleball comes along. He finds himself throwing seven hundred to eight hundred knuckleballs at a brick wall every day for a year. He gradually gets better. He becomes able to control little details such as not letting the ball revolve even once, varying speeds, and varying locations.

The majors come back. R.A. rises through spring training into the major leagues. One team leads to another, the Twins to the Mets, and he is in the starting rotation. He climbs Mt. Kilimanjaro before the 2012 season for charity.

All of a sudden, he is feeling extremely comfortable and throws two consecutive one-hitters, against the Rays and Orioles. Did someone say Cy Young? R.A. becomes considered a frontrunner for the NL Cy Young, but Gio Gonzalez and the Nationals make the playoffs. He also has twenty wins. The Mets finish another dismal season despite the work of Dickey to attain twenty wins. The Nationals lose in the first round. Bryce Harper's rookie season comes to a halt, and all R.A. can do is wait. Two native Nashvillians come out on top. Not only does David Price, out of Vanderbilt University win the AL Cy Young, but Nashville's own R.A. Dickey takes the N.L., capping off a stellar season and a great return. The late thirtysomething pitcher and father reaches his goals. From an abused childhood to a masterful knuckleballer, R.A. has mastered the quest for truth, authenticity, and the perfect knuckleball.

A jubilant R.A. after one of his victories

SPORTS

Commodore Corner

By Ben Coulthard

The Vanderbilt Commodores have started two of their major sports and have ended a third. Basketball and baseball are just starting, and the football team finished on a high note at the Music City Bowl.

Football: After the disappointing start of the football season, the Commodores and Coach James Franklin really stepped up their game. In the last issue, we left off right before the game against the Florida Gators. They had a pretty good showing, but they lost 31-17. There was a high point after the Florida game, though. Vanderbilt didn't lose a single game after the loss. They beat Auburn, Massachusetts, Kentucky, Mississippi, rival Tennessee, and Wake Forest to end going 8-4 on the season. No one had much doubt that Vandy would win the Auburn, UMASS, and Kentucky game, but Mississippi and Tennessee were games in which no one was sure who would win. The Commodores traveled to Oxford, Mississippi, and beat Ole Miss in a dramatic game 27-26. After Mississippi week, it was time for rival Tennessee to come to Nashville. Vanderbilt won in a game that featured a quarterback's benching, three interceptions, a jump pass touchdown by the running back, and the first time Vanderbilt had beaten Tennessee in Nashville since 1982. The Commodores ended the year with a resounding win over the North Carolina State Wolfpack in the Music City Bowl on New Year's Eve at LP Field.

Baseball: We left off last issue with a few days to go before the annual Black and Gold games at Hawkins Field. The Gold team opened with a walk off win in the 11th inning which meant the game the next day could only be seven innings. The Black team took advantage of some early offense, scoring three runs in the first two innings, taking an early 3-1 lead, but the Gold team came back with two runs of their own in the third inning, making the game an exciting one. The Black team etched across a run in the fifth with speedster Tony Kemp drawing a walk, stealing second base, and getting to third on a ground ball. Kemp eventually scored on a Mike Yastrzemski hit, which was the eventual game winner. The Gold team created major drama in the final Sunday game, which was a very good day for pitchers from both teams, Steven Rice and Jared Miller. Connor Castellano had a walk off hit to win the game 2-1 on the final day of baseball of the fall for Vanderbilt. The Commodores open up the regular season on February 15th against Long Beach State in what should be a very good season for the baseball team.

Basketball: Vanderbilt basketball has unfortunately shown that this season has the potential to be a VERY long one. The men's basketball team has lost some extremely winnable games, such as Davidson and Marist. They have won only two games against UTEP and Nicholls State, but had an impressive win against a good Xavier team. It looks as ift herei snot m uchhope i n VandyLandf ora s uccessfulba sketballs eason;onl yhope st hatne xtye arw illbe b etter.

Special Notes and Awards: Vanderbilt and MBA alumni Brandt Snedeker won the PGA Tour's FedEx Cup and the $10 million dollar prize this year. He had to overcome top stars such as Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy. David Price, a former Vanderbilt baseball player, won the prestigious AL Cy Young Award. This award goes to the best pitcher in the entire American League. Three former Commodore basketball players, Festus Ezeli, John Jenkins, and Jeffery Taylor were drafted by the Golden State Warriors, Atlanta Hawks, and Charlotte Bobcats respectively. Former cornerback Casey Hayward was the NFL's Defensive Player of the Month in October.

ANCHOR DOWN and GO 'DORES!

SPORTS

Vanderbilt Football: A New Era

By Mac Lassing

Prior to head Coach James Franklin's arrival at Vanderbilt University, the football program had undergone a century of struggle, winning only four bowl games in the history of the program. When Coach Franklin arrived on campus in early 2011, he promised the program change--not only changing the wins every year, but also changing the culture and the facilities. The Commodore Nation had their doubts about this coach who was an offensive coordinator at Maryland, but believed in him and supported his decisions. Coach James Franklin made the fan base believe as he got six wins in his first year as a coach, leading his team to the Liberty Bowl in Memphis. Although Vanderbilt lost the bowl game to a talented Cincinnati team, Franklin used the loss as motivation the next year. A month after the Liberty Bowl, Franklin made a huge step in the program, announcing the building of a new multi-purpose indoor practice facility, a new turf field, and a new jumbo-tron for the stadium. The new field and jumbo-tron were completed before the start of the 2012 season, and the practice facility is scheduled to be completed by October 2013.

The 2012 season had a bumpy start going 1-3 losing to South Carolina, Northwestern, and Georgia. Coach Franklin asked the fans to stay with him and continue to support the team. From that point on, Vanderbilt finished the season 8-1 with a six-game win streak to end the year. One of those wins was against in-state rival the Tennessee Volunteers whom the Commodores hadn't beat in Nashville since 1982. The Commodores beat the Volunteers 41-18 in front of a sellout crowd at Vanderbilt Stadium. With the 8-4 record, Vanderbilt received a bid to play in the Music City Bowl against NC State on New Year's Eve in Nashville. Led by seniors Zac Stacy and Jordan Rodgers, the Commodores anchored down and beat the Wolf pack 38-24 in front of 50,000 Commodore fans. This marked the second bowl game under James Franklin in just two years. Coach Franklin turned around a program that had a 2-10 record prior to his arrival, taking the team to two consecutive bowl games for the first time in school history. Also, The Commodores currently have the 14th best recruiting class in the nation under Coach James Franklin. The Commodore Nation can't wait for next season and knows the best is yet to come for the Commodores. ANCHOR DOWN!

Vandy wide receiver, Jordan Matthews

Top of the Hill Trivia Corner

By Jake Evans

1. How much of a Twinkie is air?
2. How many tail feathers were on the original NBC peacock?
3. What does "ZIP" stand for in ZIP Code?
4. Who was the first woman to run for president?
5. How many countries won at least one medal in the 2012 London Olympics?

SPORTS

The Bowl Season

By Jake Evans

Bowl season is the best time of the year in college football. It can be the perfect end to a magical season, or the reason your holidays are ruined. It gathers enormous numbers of fans together to cheer in a common interest. Long story short, it's a wonderful time of year that's full of suspense and down-to-the-wire games that fans love to watch.

This bowl season has had its share of blowouts like Oklahoma State's win against Purdue in the Heart of Dallas Bowl 58-14. It has also had intense, down-to-the-wire games like Clemson's 25-24 win over LSU with a field goal as time expired in the Chick-fil-a Bowl, and South Carolina's 33-28 win over Michigan in the Outback Bowl thanks to a 32-yard touchdown pass with eleven seconds to go. Along with blowouts and nailbiters, there have also been a few upsets, headlined by Florida's 33-23 loss to the underdog Louisville in the Allstate Sugar Bowl, and Oregon's easy win over the former AP #1 Kansas State 35-17 in the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl. With every good season comes a star player bringing his team up to the top with him. This year Texas A&M's QB Johnny Manziel was that person. He set numerous records, including becoming the first freshman ever to win the Heisman Trophy. With his amazing season came a massive win in the AT&T Cotton Bowl 41-13 over Oklahoma in which he ran and passed his way for over 500 yards total and 4 touchdowns to help the Aggies crush the Sooners in Cowboy Stadium.

Vanderbilt took home the Franklin American Mortgage Music City Bowl trophy after a convincing 38-24 victory over NC State. Although the score shows an easy win for the Dores, Vandy was ousted by almost 200 yards on the offensive side. Sadly for the Wolf Pack, this stat was the only one that NC State ruled. The Commodores won a few of the most important categories including a +5 turnover margin (5-0 Vandy), total rushing yards by 76 (117-41), and 4th down percentage 75% (3-4) which kept three key drives alive in their victory.

This year's BCS National Championship had two of the nation's best offenses and defenses in #1 Notre Dame and #2 Alabama facing off in Miami for what should've been a good game. Sadly, Alabama's great offense and defense showed while Heisman runner-up Manti Te'o and the Fighting Irish sat watching the Crimson Tide drive seemingly right through them almost every time Bama got the ball. The Tide rolled to a 42-14 victory behind 529 yards of total offense, 265 of which came on the ground from Eddie Lacy and T.J. Yeldon, who had over 100 yards and a TD each. Amari Cooper pitched in as well with 2 touchdowns and a team high six catches for 105 yards. The Irish kept trying to get a spark from a special teams play or whatever was available, but whenever they got a chance, the Tide instantly shut them down. One of the most impressive stats for Alabama was that when the Irish scored a TD with 4:08 left in the 3rd quarter, those were the first points the Crimson Tide had allowed in about 100 minutes of National Championship play, dating back to last year's stunning 21-0 win over LSU.

Alabama's controlling victory over Notre Dame ended an interesting bowl season full of blowouts, nail biters, record-setting games, and the question left for every college football fan. Can anyone stop the Alabama Crimson Tide?

SPORTS

Any Given Sunday

By Ben Rosenthal

On December 30, the NFL regular season came to a close. Many major events shaped the year outside of football, and of course, many controversial plays also determined the view of all fans on the 2012-2013 season. Let's take a look at the events that shaped the game this year:

1). Replacement refs - Golden Tate... need I say more? The refs, pulled up from colleges in D2 and D3, were not able to perform at the same level as usual refs who were in their own 'lockout' just as the players were the year prior. The games were filled with bad calls, but it was not until after Seattle's infamous 'inter-touchdown' in week three that everyone was convinced that the arguments between the real referees and the league had to stop. The missed call in that Packers vs. Seahawks game gave Green Bay a loss, which later in the season prevented them from the two seed in the playoffs and a first-round-bye.

2). Chuck Pagano - Pagano, head coach of the Indianapolis Colts, was diagnosed with leukemia early in the season. His fight with the illness inspired the team, and even though he was not able to coach again until week sixteen, his team was faced with lots of adversity in their first year with Andrew Luck after a 2-14 season last year. The Colts prospered, despite the setback, and were able to finish with the five seed in the AFC.

3). Rule change - Rumor has it that Roger Goodell is trying to get enough support to eliminate kickoffs from the game. Many believe that this rule would be a detriment to the sport as some stars such as Devon Hester, Leon Washington, Jacoby Jones, and Joshua Cribbs would never have been important to their teams if not for kickoffs. Another rule that many people feel needs to be changed is the 'challenge on a scoring play' rule. After Justin Forsett had both his knee and elbow touch the ground on a play, he got up and ran eighty more yards for a touchdown. Jim Schwartz, the Lions' coach, was understandably frustrated and threw a challenge flag. Since the play was already automatically reviewed, he got an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty of fifteen yards, and the play was no longer reviewable. This seemingly ridiculous rule changed the game and allowed the Texans to make a comeback.

4). Records - Over thirty new records were set or tied this year. Although many were obscure, such as Danny Amendola's record for most first half receptions (12), some records were long-standing ones held previously by NFL legends, such as Jerry Rice's receiving record broken this year by Calvin Johnson. Other records were nearly broken, such as Aldon Smith and J.J. Watt, who almost broke the record for sacks in a year, or Adrian Peterson, who fell just nine yards shy of the rushing record for one season.

These events helped shape the season and affected which teams would be in the playoffs, and in which seed. Here is an analysis of the teams in the playoffs.

NFC:

1). Atlanta Falcons - The Falcons 'flew' under the radar this year. Although they finished the season tied with the Broncos (whom they beat) for the best record in the NFL (13-3), many fans expect them to lose their first playoff game. Personally, I do not see this happening. They are 13-3 for a reason, and with Matt Ryan having the best year of his career, while passing to excellent receivers such as Julio Jones, Roddy White and Tony Gonzalez, they have an explosive passing offense. Another interesting statistic is that their three losses were to other teams in their division, and they have not lost outside of it. No other teams are undefeated out of the division, and no other teams from the NFC South are in the playoffs. Interpret as you wish.

2). San Francisco 49ers - The 49ers have had an up-and-down season. With huge wins such as Green Bay and New England, but a tie and a loss against the Rams, they switched to Colin Kaepernick midway through the season, and his mobility has been a huge asset. The team has a great defense, but their kicker has been shaky since making a sixty-three yard field goal in the first week. In their bye week in the playoffs, they picked up veteran kicker Billy Cundiff. They made the two seed after Green Bay lost their last game.

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3). Green Bay Packers - After a slow start, the Packers have recovered nicely. They were robbed of a game in week three but still controlled the two seed until their loss to the Vikings. They have had many injuries, and a bye would have helped them recover, but their chances still are very good with Aaron Rodgers as quarterback.

4). Washington Redskins - The Redskins secured the four seed after defeating the Cowboys in their final regular season game. Rookie stars Alfred Morris and Robert Griffin III have lifted their offense to new heights, and a late season winning streak spurred them to the spot they now hold. The team has momentum but plays a tough Seattle team in the wildcard round.

5). Seattle Seahawks - The Seahawks finished the season strong with a five-game winning streak. They also won games against many tough opponents, beating three of the four teams receiving a playoff bye. They are undefeated at home and have the loudest stadium in the NFL. Unfortunately for them, they do not play home games in the postseason because they finished as the five seed. Their record does not indicate where they are seeded, however, and if the Rams defeated the 49ers in their first matchup instead of tying, the Seahawks would be the two seed.

6). Minnesota Vikings - Two words… Adrian Peterson. Finishing nine yards shy of the rushing record less than a year after tearing his ACL, he has been the single player that has kept his team alive. Their record slipped after a 4-1 start to 6-6, but they recovered by winning their last four to slip into the six seed. Their quarterback, Christian Ponder, is not consistent, and it will be hard for them to make a long run with the talent they have.

AFC

1). Denver Broncos - The Broncos started 2-3 but have not lost since. Their losses were to a one, two, and three seed, so it was not an easy road for Peyton Manning, who was recovering from neck surgery. The Broncos are the favorites to win the Super Bowl. As I did with the Falcons, I will give you a stat to ponder. The Broncos are the only NFL team with a top five offense and defense.

2). New England Patriots - The Pats secured the two seed after a win and a Houston loss in Week 17. They have an explosive offense that has discovered a much-improved running game. They have one of the league's best quarterbacks in Tom Brady, who has had to deal with multiple injuries in his receiving core. The bye week will give them time to recover.

3). Houston Texans - The Texans are having their best season ever. Unfortunately, the end of it has taken a downhill turn with their losing three of their last four and slipping from the within reach of the one seed all the way to three. They have a strong offense and running game as well as defense, but have succumbed to injuries.

4). Baltimore Ravens - In Ray Lewis' final season, the Ravens secured the four spot after winning their division over the Bengals. They play the Colts and have had an average season, but they have the potential to be an explosive team with a great running back in Ray Rice and a shutdown defense.

5). Indianapolis Colts - The Colts (11-5) have been playing inspired football this year. The 'Comeback Player of the Year' award may go to Adrian Peterson or Peyton Manning, but if the award was for a team, it would no doubt go to the Colts. They had an abysmal 2011 season and finished with the first overall draft pick. The leadership of their new QB has taken them a long way, placing them in one of the only four new available playoff spots (which is also a record). After their coach fell ill to leukemia, against all odds, they made it to the playoffs under the leadership of Andrew Luck. They have had key wins such as their comeback at Green Bay, but they have a long shot at going all the way.

6). Cincinnati Bengals - The Bengals made the last spot in the playoffs with a 10-6 record. They have been a little inconsistent but have potential threats in Andy Dalton and A.J. Green. They have the same playoff matchup in the first round as they did last year, but they are hoping for a better result. To end on one final stat, of all of the playoff teams, Cincinnati has the lowest average winning percentage for the teams they have defeated.

So that is the NFL season summed up as briefly as I can. Who do you think will win the Superbowl this year? Will these teams be contenders next year, unlike the Giants who failed to make the playoffs after winning the Superbowl last year? Only one thing is certain… if the Cardinals can beat the Patriots, then anything can happen on any given Sunday.

SPORTS

Interview with Shea Weber

By John Whitaker

I had the pleasure of interviewing Shea Weber on September 27, 2012. Here are his thoughts on a multitude of topics.

John Whitaker: Were you expecting Nashville to re-sign you, or were you expecting to end up in Philly?
Shea Weber: I was expecting to end up in Nashville. They were very adamant that they would match any offer sheet, so I had an idea the whole time that I would still be here.

JW: How are your feelings towards Nashville as a city and as your team?
SW: I love it. I've grown to love this city. Obviously, when I was first drafted in 2003, I did not know a whole lot about it, but I've come to learn it's a hockey city, and the fans are great. It is a great place to live

JW: I know Ryan Suter has been your teammate and partner on defense for a while. How do you feel now that he is gone?
SW: It's going to be different; that's for sure. He is a really good friend of mine, and it is tough to see him go, but he made a personal decision of which I support. We've got a couple of young guys that are able to step up and play more minutes, and it will be exciting.

JW: Who do you think will replace him on line one?
SW: That's a tough call. That is probably going to be Trotz's call, but if I had to say right now I would say Roman Josi would spend some time up there.

JW: Are you confident with the team on offense, defense, and goaltending?
SW: Yeah, I think so. I think we have the best goaltender in the league, Pekka. From the defensive side we've got great young defenseman, and our team has done a great job at drafting, and our power play last year showed we have good offense and can score goals.

JW: In your opinion, who do you think will come up offensively as a leader to the team?
SW: Obviously, there are the usual guys: Fisher, Erat, Legwand, but if I had to say another guy this year, I would say Craig Smith and Colin Wilson are kind of in line to score more goals and assists this year and put up bigger numbers.

JW: What is your pregame ritual?
SW: It is kind of a daily thing. I eat the same breakfast every day. We go to the rink for a pregame skate. From there, we go to lunch. Some guys go to Amerigo's or Maggiano's; some just eat chicken and pasta. Then, we just go home and take a nap for an hour and a half, and we usually go back to the rink, for me at four, to get ready for a 7pm game.

JW: At what age did you start playing hockey?
SW: I started playing hockey at age 5; I started skating when I was 4, so I've been skating for a long time, and it's definitely something you have to practice a lot.

JW: What position were you when you started?
SW: I was actually a forward. I played forward until I was 12 or 13, but I lived in a small town and we didn't have a lot of defenseman, so I was forced to play D. Thankfully, it worked out for the best.

JW: Do you have any siblings? Did they or do they currently play hockey?
SW: Yeah, I have a younger brother, he's two years younger than I am, and he did play hockey, but he is a

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Shea Weber and John Whitaker

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heavy duty mechanic now.

JW: What was your favorite team growing up; who was your favorite player?
SW: I liked Montreal, and when San Jose came in the league I cheered for them, mostly because I like their jerseys. I didn't really have a real prime favorite. Obviously, Rob Blake is one of my favorites. I tried to emulate myself after him.

JW: Did you play any other sports growing up? Do you still enjoy playing others now?
SW: I played baseball until I was 16, and I still play it.

JW: Do you follow any sports teams outside the NHL?
SW: Yep, I follow the Toronto Blue Jays; they're my team. Since I'm in Tennessee, I also follow the Titans.

JW: What are your top three favorite restaurants in Nashville and why?
SW: Ooh, that's tough. I like Stoney River; they have a good steak, and I like Maggiano's. Actually, another good Italian spot is Café Nona.

JW: Where are your favorite NHL cities to visit?
SW: Vancouver is probably the biggest for me, because it is closest to home, and I get to see a lot of family and friends there.

JW: Were there any key losses in your mind other than Suter?
SW: I think that one loss that people won't realize is Francis Bouillon. He was a good depth defenseman and really came on at the end of the season.

JW: Are you into technology? Do you have to have the latest gadget?
SW: I don't have to have the latest gadget, but I have the iPhone, so I guess I would call myself into it. I spend a little time on my iPad and iPhone.

John interviews Shea Weber on Sept. 27, 2012

JW: Is there one teammate you enjoy hanging out with?
SW: Yeah, there are a couple of guys: Pekka and Patric Hornqvist. Both Pekka and I came over (to the NHL) at the same time, so we've spent some time together.

JW: Do you have a favorite place to go on vacation?
SW: I can't say I've spent much time on vacation, but I have a lake up near me that I like to hang out at, and that's kind of like a vacation for me.

JW: Do you play video games?
SW: Yeah, I like to play *Madden*.

JW: Is there anything you can tell me about the lockout, like how it's going?
SW: Well, both sides know the impact of a lockout, so maybe a fair deal can be solved soon, so we can be playing hockey again.

JW: What's your favorite food?
SW: Probably steak, whatever starch and a steak.

JW: What's the best part about Nashville?
SW: I like the people, and I think it has a small town feel. I'm from a small town, and I just like being able to talk to anyone in just a friendly atmosphere.

JW: What kind of car do you drive?
SW: I knew you were going to ask that one! I've got a Ford Raptor and an Aston Martin.

JW: What clothes do you generally like to wear?
SW: Pretty casual; at games we have to wear suits. Other than that, I like summer clothes like shorts and t-shirts.

JW: Have you ever had a favorite pet or current pet?
SW: Yeah, my favorite pet probably is my current pet. I have a dog named Doug; he is a Great Dane, English Mastiff cross. He's a big boy.

JW: Is there anything else cool about you I forgot to ask?
SW: I don't think so. I think you have pretty much done it. In the summer I just go home and golf and surf on the lake.

BIG RED SPORTS

Soccer A: Nine is Mighty Fine!

By Will Warren

Congratulations to the Microbe A soccer team: nine-time HVAC soccer champs!

The Microbe Soccer A team just finished another successful HVAC soccer season. With eight consecutive championships, the team had high hopes, and the previous players had high expectations of our keeping the impressive streak intact.

Even though we lost some big and strong eighth-grade players, we picked up some quick and crafty seventh-graders, and the coaches were able to move players into positions to help the team succeed.

Like last year's team, the Microbes played really tough defense. The goalkeepers, Dean Cheevers, Jorma McClure, and Jack O'Brien had five shut-outs in the regular season. The defense, as a whole, allowed only four goals during the regular season.

A few of the more competitive and memorable matches of the regular season were against Brentwood Academy, CPA, and University School of Nashville. BA and CPA ended in 1-1 and 0-0 ties, respectively. USN beat us 0-1; our only loss in two years. We finished the regular season 6-1-2, before we headed into the HVAC Playoffs.

The Microbes' quarterfinal match was a rematch with BGA, and we had the same 2-1 victory, but this time it took Ellis Moore's Golden Goal in triple overtime to decide who would play CPA in the semifinals. Since CPA was last year's finalist, and we had already tied them 0-0 earlier this season; we knew it would be another tough one. It was a well-played match, and Ellis had another game-winning goal to get the Microbes back into the finals.

The Microbes were glad to play USN again. This time the match was on our home turf and in the HVAC Final. Under the lights on MBA's field turf and in front of an amazing crowd, the Microbes played one of their best matches of the season against a really good USN team. Even though MBA had many chances to take an early lead, USN's defense stood up, and goalkeeper Jackson Bryant made great save after great save. Thankfully, Ellis had a little magic left and scored what would turn out to be the game-winning goal in double overtime.

The Microbes had two more shut-outs in the HVAC Playoffs and finished the season, going 9-1-2 and outscoring their opponents 30 - 5 on the season. While the Microbes' extended the HVAC streak to nine (and counting) was impressive and the well-deserved individual All-HVAC honors for Ellis Moore, William Porter, Collin Ragsdale and Alden Ferguson were nice, the real success and accomplishment was the way the coaches instructed and guided us, and the way the players gave 110%, improving with every practice and every match, and playing the "simple" game, not only to the best of their ability, but most importantly- together, as a team.

Thank you to our Coaches, the amazing supportive fans, and all of those players who have contributed to our HVAC streak. Good luck next year. Roll Red Roll!!

The 2012 Microbe C Soccer Team

BIG RED SPORTS

Microbe B Soccer

By Will Weaver

With a 7-0-1 record, this year's B team soccer really outplayed the competition. The team beat all of the competitors except for a 0-0 tie against Brentwood Academy. Some of this year's highlights were a 10-0 win over Ensworth, an 8-0 win over Harding, and a 3-0 win over USN to finish the season. This year's goalies were Ben Elasy and John Lang. Between the two of them, all the opposing teams combined managed only three goals on them.

The A team may have nine straight HVAC championships under their belt, but this year's B team was also very successful by not losing a single game.

It was a privilege to play with this extraordinary group of athletes before many of them move on to high school. The team won its first three games before they had even practiced! I sure hope this shows the high school guys that we Microbes are more than they think we are.

Winners Always Wrestle

By Riley Steanson

The 2012 Microbe Wrestling Team

The Microbe wrestling team's season started with its annual "Silver vs. Cardinal" match. This match includes dividing the team in half and scrimmaging. Coaches Shone and McMurray then chose their starters for the first match of the season against Franklin Road Academy. The Big Red won at home to start the season. The team then engaged in their first wrestle-offs, in which winners of the head-to-head matchups earned a starting spot against Ensworth, where the team went home victors. The matches against Battle Ground Academy and Harding academies were also victories.

On the first Saturday of November, the MBA Middle School Duals became the talk of the team. The team's first match of the day was against Sunset Middle. The reason we beat them was it was nowhere near the sunset (Get it?). The team's second match was against Dickson Middle. The last match of the pool was against Baylor from Chattanooga. Their best two wrestlers were in a national tournament in Oklahoma. They turned out to be crucial, because the Big Red beat them as well. Our cross-bracket match was against Mt. Juliet, and we lost to them but put up a good fight. We wrestled Sunset again but lost because it was close to the sunset at this time. We placed fourth overall.

Our last match before the HVAC tournament was against Brentwood Academy. We had Red Flag Day, an intense conditioning workout day right before it. We showed BA what we were really made of and defeated them by an astronomical margin.

In the HVAC, the tournament was individual, meaning that every wrestler was to fend for himself in his weight class. We had individual champions at 100, 112, 160, 175, and 225 lbs. We had second place finishes at 107 and 135 lbs. We had third place finishes at 88 and 120 lbs. We had fourth place finishes at 82, 95, 127, and 145 lbs. In the tournament overall, the Big Red placed first as a team, ahead of BA by forty points. That's it for this half of the season, and we are looking forward to the next half.

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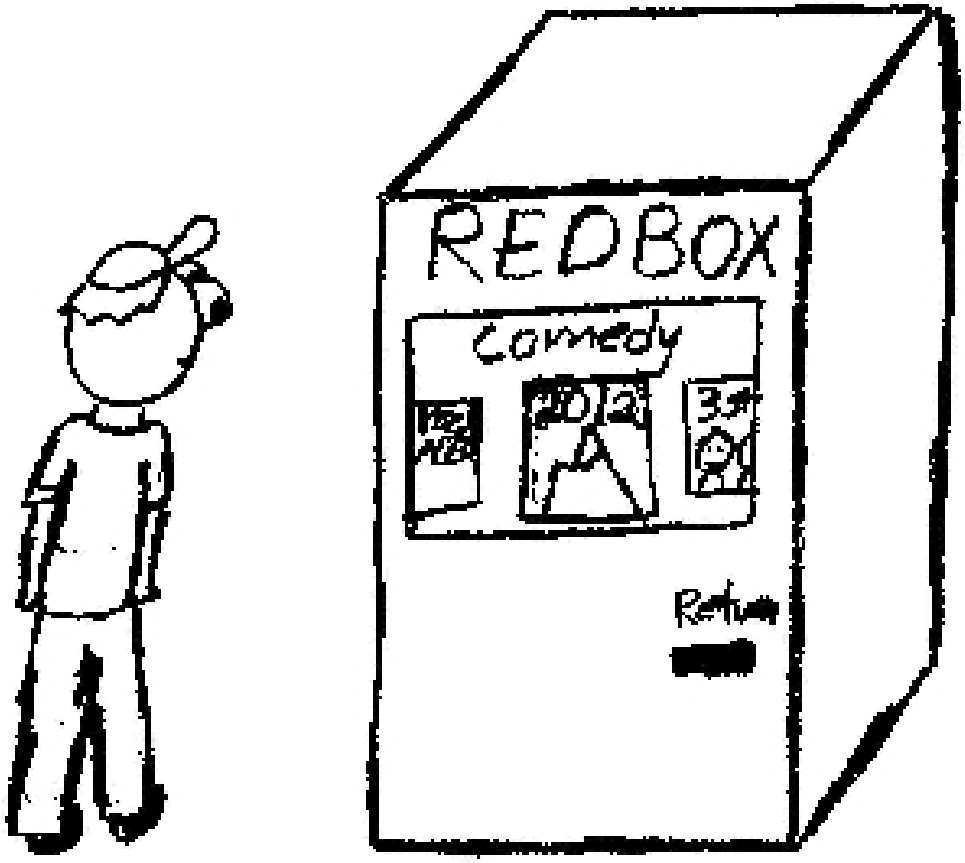

Comic by Ben Gauldin

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